

Bipartisan bill that would create the United States' 59th National Park

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Washington, DC – The House of Representatives today passed Congressman Sam Farr's (D-Carmel) bill to elevate the 26,000 acres of Pinnacles National Monument to a National Park. The bipartisan bill, H.R. 3641, the Pinnacles National Park Act, co-sponsored by Rep. Jeff Denham (R-CA), recognizes and preserves the diverse ecosystems, geology and cultural history of the area by conferring National Park status. Additionally, the bill renames the Pinnacles Wilderness as the Hain Wilderness.

"This California gem is one of the rare examples of tectonic plate movement in the United States," said Congressman Farr. "The Pinnacles is the missing novel in the grand library of the National Park System and today's vote brings us one step closer to writing that book. With the added status as a National Park, generations of visitors will now travel to the region to experience this unique ecological and geological treasure."

Created in 1908 by President Theodore Roosevelt, Pinnacles National Monument is the 11th oldest National Monument in the United States. The area draws its name from the volcanic spires that were formed by the eruption of the Neenach Volcano over 23 million years ago.

The Pinnacles system is home to 149 species of birds, 49 mammals, 22 reptiles, six amphibians, 68 butterflies, 36 dragonflies and damselflies, nearly 400 bees and many thousands of other invertebrates.

The monument is also home to 30 endangered California condors. Since 2003, the Park Service has been a part of the California Condor Recovery Program to re-establish California condors at Pinnacles.

Recognizing the economic potential for the region through increased tourism, the legislation has local, grassroots support. It is supported by Monterey and San Benito counties, including their respective Chambers of Commerce and Visitor's Bureaus. Ken Burns, director of The National Parks: America's Best Idea" also supports the legislation.

"Situated slightly inland from the California coast, Pinnacles National Monument has not yet realized its full tourism potential but anyone who has visited this place knows it is special," said Congressman Farr. "From exploring caves, to viewing springtime wildflowers, to hiking through spire-like rock formations, visitors and families can participate in activities that leave lasting memories. It is truly worthy of National Park Status."

Today's vote moves the bill to the Senate.

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